

Absentee Ballot Tracking Process

Clerks will have to constantly update their Absentee Ballot Log (GAB-124) as absentee ballots are received. The Absentee Ballot Log will be used in the clerk's office and by election inspectors on Election Day to verify the current status of an absentee ballot. Information on the GAB-124 will be used to determine whether a voter may receive a replacement absentee ballot or envelope vote in their polling place.

Upon receiving absentee ballots, clerks will need to check absentee ballot envelopes for any certificate errors. Please see Instructions for Processing Voters with Incomplete or No Certificate Absentee Ballot Envelopes.

Instructions for Processing Incomplete or No Certificate Absentee Ballot Envelopes

1) Upon receipt of an absentee ballot, please examine the envelope for any errors.

For example:

- No certificate
- Missing voter signature
- Missing witness signature
- Missing 2 Special Voting Deputy (SVD) signatures

2) If there is a certificate error on the absentee ballot envelope, please contact the absentee voter immediately. Inform the absentee voter of the error and the opportunity to correct the absentee ballot envelope any time before the election at the clerk's office, by mail, or on Election Day at their polling place or central count location. Replacement envelopes should be available to voters at polling places or central count locations.

a) Voters should be informed of the need to bring the original witness to the clerk's office, polling place, or central count location to correct the absentee envelope. The original witness must **always** be present to correct **any** incomplete or no certificate errors on the absentee ballot envelope.

3) Document incomplete or no certificate envelopes on the Absentee Ballot Log (GAB-124). Do not process or reject uncorrected certificate envelopes until 8 p.m. on Election Day. Please group absentee ballots with incomplete or no certificate envelopes.

4) Correcting Incomplete or No Certificate Envelopes

a) Correct by mail

If time permits, clerks should send the envelope containing the ballot and a new absentee ballot envelope to the voter and remind the voter that they and the original witness must both execute the new envelope.

Voters must personally deliver a corrected envelope containing their ballot by 8 p.m. on Election Day to their polling place or central count location, or by mail if postmarked by Election Day and received by 4pm on the Friday after the election.

Please note: Under the “whenever time permits language” of the Wisconsin Statutes , a municipal clerk should mail out a replacement ballot envelope if there is enough time for the ballot to be received by the elector on or before Election Day. The voter must submit their absentee ballot by U.S. Postal Service postmarked on or before Election Day. The ballot must be received by the Friday after the election by 4 p.m., in order to be counted.

b) Correct in the Clerk’s office (prior to Election Day).

Voters will be able to correct and submit absentee envelopes on-site. Ballots may not be taken from the clerk’s office.

Inform the voter that the original witness **must** accompany them to the clerk’s office.

c) Correct at the polling place or central count location.

Voters may correct and submit absentee ballots on site. Ballots may not be taken from the polling place or central count location. Replacement absentee envelopes should be available to voters at polling places or central count locations.

Inform the voter that the original witness **must** accompany them to the polling place or central count location.

Reminder: Do not process or reject uncorrected incomplete or no certificate envelopes until 8 p.m. on Election Day.

Please note: Voters with incomplete or no certificate envelopes who did not receive or return a replacement envelope cannot vote in-person at the polling place. Voters with incomplete or no certificate envelopes can correct their envelopes up to and including Election Day.

Instructions for Processing Damaged or Spoiled Ballots

Clerk does believe the person requesting a replacement ballot is the person to whom the original ballot was provided

1) Absentee ballot has been returned to the clerk. The voter wishes to vote a new ballot.

2a) Clerk does believe the person requesting a replacement ballot is the person to whom the original ballot was provided.

(See 2b below if the clerk does not believe the person requesting a replacement ballot is the person to whom the original ballot was provided)

3) Give the voter a replacement ballot, if within the proper deadline (see Absentee Ballot Request Timeline below).

4) Clerk shall destroy the spoiled or damaged ballot by making a small tear in the envelope containing the ballot and writing “spoiled” on the outside of the envelope. A notation should be made on the GAB-124 (Absentee Ballot Log) that the first ballot was cancelled and a second ballot was issued. Place the

spoiled ballot in the spoiled ballot envelope or container that will be transmitted to the polling place on Election Day.

5) Voters must personally deliver or mail absentee ballots under the normal timeline (personally deliver the ballot to their polling place or central count location by 8 p.m. on Election Day or mail with Election Day postmark date and received by 4 p.m. the Friday after the election).

OR

Clerk does not believe the person requesting a replacement ballot is the person to whom the original ballot was provided

1) Absentee ballot has been returned to the clerk. The voter wishes to vote a new ballot.

2b) Clerk does not believe the person requesting a replacement ballot is the person to whom the original ballot was provided.

3) If within the proper deadline, issue a replacement ballot and document that the ballot should be challenged on Election Day by the clerk (see Absentee Ballot Request Timeline below). Contact law enforcement immediately. Contacting the police immediately allows for a timely and more comprehensive investigation (second voter can be questioned further; closer in time to first vote so election officials may be able to assist with a description; etc.).

4) Clerk shall destroy the spoiled or damaged ballot by making a small tear in the envelope containing the ballot and writing “spoiled” on the outside of the envelope. A notation should be made on the GAB-124 (Absentee Ballot Log) that first ballot was cancelled and a second ballot was issued.

5) Voters must personally deliver or mail absentee ballots under the normal timeline (personally deliver the ballot to their polling place or central count location by 8 p.m. on Election Day. Mail with Election Day postmark date and received by 4 p.m. the Friday after the election). Place the spoiled ballot in the spoiled ballot envelope or container that will be transmitted to the polling place on Election Day.

Please note: A voter who did not receive a replacement ballot by mail or chose not to return a replacement ballot for a spoiled or damaged ballot is able to vote in-person at the polling place. The absentee ballot log (GAB-124) should indicate the first ballot was cancelled and a second ballot was issued.

Absentee Ballot Request Timeline

Regular absentee voters must request replacement ballots by 5 p.m. the Thursday before the election.

Indefinitely confined and military voters must request replacement ballots by 5 p.m. the Friday before the election.

Military electors away from their voting residence may request absentee ballots by 5 p.m. on Election Day for the partisan primary, the general election, the presidential preference primary, or a special election for national office.

Absentee ballots must be requested in person by 5 p.m. or the close of business, whichever is later, the Friday before the election.

Instructions for Dealing with Absentee Voters at the Polling Place on Election Day

At the polling place or central count location:

1) If a voter has an absentee designation in the poll book, check the absentee ballot log to see if the absentee ballot was received.

2a) If it was received, the voter cannot vote at the polling place.

2b) If it was not received, the election inspector asks the voter, “Did you mail or personally deliver your absentee ballot to the clerk’s office?” (See 3a or 3b).

3a) Yes. The voter cannot vote at the polling place.

3b) No. The voter gets a ballot.

Please note: A voter who did not receive a replacement ballot by mail or chose not to return a replacement ballot for a spoiled or damaged ballot is able to vote in-person at the polling place. The absentee ballot log (GAB-124) should indicate the first ballot was cancelled and a second ballot was issued.

Please note: Voters with incomplete or no certificate envelopes who did not receive or return a replacement envelope cannot vote in-person at the polling place. Voters with incomplete or no certificate envelopes can correct their envelopes up to and including Election Day.